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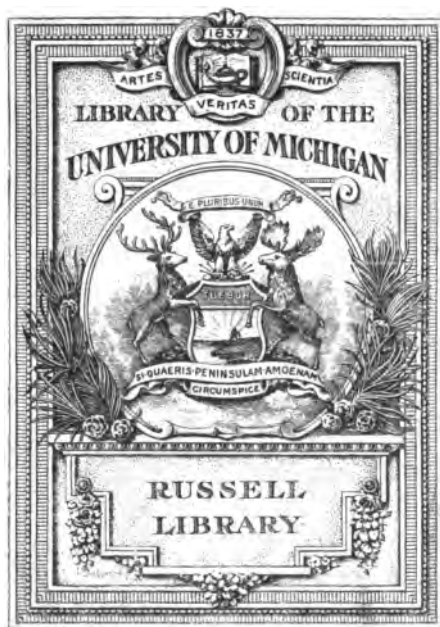
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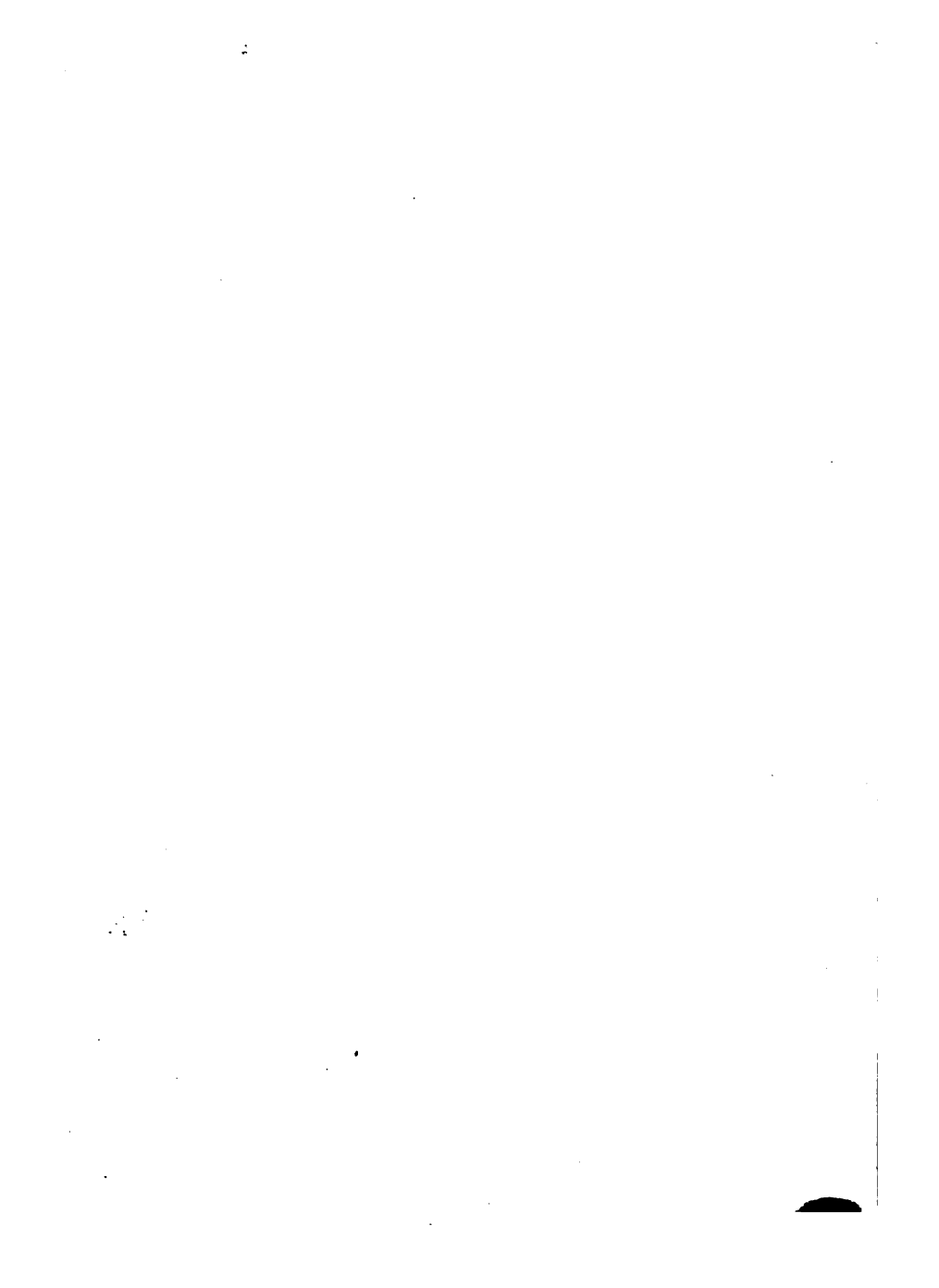
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The Creation Story

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Gift
J H Russell
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THE CREATION STORY.

—
"The rising birth
Of Nature from the unapparent deep."
Par. Lost. B. vii.

06-20-33 Aug

IN recent controversies on the trustworthiness of the Scripture record, much has been thought to turn on the Creation Story; and the special and separate importance thus attached to it has given it a separate and prominent position in the public view. This constitutes in itself a reason for addressing ourselves at once to the consideration of it, apart from any more general investigation touching either the older Scriptures at large, or any of the books which collectively compose them.

But there are broader and deeper reasons for this separate consideration. It is suggested, first, by the form which has been given to the relation itself. The narrative, given with wonderful succinctness in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis, and in the first three verses of the second chapter, stands distinct, in essential points,

from all that follows in the Scriptures. It is a solitary and striking example of the detailed exposition of physical facts. For such an example we must suppose a purpose; and we have to inquire what that purpose was. Next, it seems as it were to trespass on the ground of science, and, independently of investigation and of evidence, to assert a rival authority. And further, forming no part, unless towards its close, of the history of man, and nowhere touching directly on human action, it severs itself from the rest of the Sacred Volume, and appears more as a preface to the history, than as a part of it.

And yet there are signs, in subsequent portions of the Volume, that this tale of the Creation was regarded by the Hebrews as both authoritative and important. For it gave form and shape to portions of their literature, in the central department of its devotions. Nay, traces of it may, perhaps, be found in the Book of Job (xxxviii.), where the Almighty challenges the patriarch on the primordial works of creation. More clearly in Psalm civ., where we have light, the firmament, the waters and their severance and confinement within bounds; a succession the same as in Genesis. Then follow mixedly the animal and vegetable creations, and man as the climax crowns the

series in ver. 23. So in Psalm cxlviii. we have first (1-6) the heavens, the heavenly bodies, and the atmosphere; then, again mixedly, the earth and the agents affecting it, with the animate population (7-10), and lastly man. If there be some variation in the order of the details, still the idea of consecutive development, or evolution, which struck so forcibly the intelligence of Haeckel, is clearly impressed upon the whole. At a later date, and only (so far as is known) in the Greek tongue, we find a more nearly exact resemblance in the Song of the Three Children. The heavenly bodies and phenomena occupy the first division of the Song; then the earth is invoked to bless the Lord, with its mountains, vegetation, and waters; then the animate population of water, air, and land, in the order pursued in the first chapter of Genesis, and with the same remarkable omission of the great kingdom of the Reptiles at their proper place. Then follow the children of Men; and these fill the closing portion of the Song. The most noteworthy differences (which, however, are quite secondary, seem to be that there is no mention of the first beginnings of vegetation, and no supplemental notice, as in Gen. i. 24-30, of the reptiles.

But also the sun, moon, and stars, which

are categorically placed later in Genesis than vegetation, precede in the Song any notice of the earth. Let not this difference be hastily called a discrepancy. Each mode is to be explained by considering the character and purpose of the composition. In Genesis, it is a narrative of the action; in the Song, it is a panorama of the spectacle. Genesis, as a rule, refers each of the great factors of the visible world to its due order of origin in time; the Song enumerates the particulars as they are presented to the eye in a picture, where the transcendent eminence of the heavenly bodies as they are, and especially of the sun, gives to this group a proper priority.

But this Creation Story may have an importance for us even greater than it had for the Hebrews, or than it could have in any of those ages when all men believed, perhaps even too freely, in special modes of communication from the Deity to man, and had not a stock of courage or of audacity sufficient to question the possibility of a divine revelation. For we have now to bear in mind that the Book of Genesis generally contains a portion of human history, and that all human history is a record of human experience. It is not so with the introductory recital; for the contents of it lie outside of, and anterior to, the very

earliest human experience. How came, then, this recital into the possession of a portion of mankind?

It is conceivable that a theory of Creation and of the ordering of the world might be bodied forth in poetry, or might under given circumstances be, as now, based on the researches of natural science.

But, in the first place, this recital cannot be due to the mere imagination of a poet. It is in a high degree, as we shall see, methodical and elaborate. And there is nothing either equalling or within many degrees approaching it, which can be set down to the account of poetry in other spheres of primitive antiquity, whatever their poetical opulence may have been. Further, the early Hebrews do not appear to have cultivated or developed any poetical faculty at all, except that which was exhibited in strictly religious work, such as the devotions of the Psalms, and (principally) the discourses and addresses of the Prophets.

As they were not, in a general sense, poetical, so neither were they in any sense scientific. By tradition, and by positive records, we know pretty well what kinds of knowledge were pursued in very early ages. They were most strictly practical. Take, for example, astronomy among the

Chaldees, or medicine among the Egyptians. The necessities of life then, as now, pressed upon man. We may say with much confidence that in remote antiquity there existed no science like geology, aiming to give a history of the earth. So, again, there was no cosmogony, professing to convey a history of the *kosmos* as then understood; which would have included, together with the earth, the sun, moon, planets, and atmosphere.

When, at a later date, speculation on physical origins began, it was rather on the primary idea than on any systematic arrangement or succession. With the Ionic, which was the earliest school of philosophy, the human intelligence was mainly busied in contending for one or other of the known material elements, as entitled to the honors of the primordial cause. Nor had even the Greeks or Romans formulated any scheme in any degree approaching that of Genesis for order and method, so late as the time when they became acquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures through their translation into Greek. The opening statement of Ovid in the "Metamorphoses" is remarkable; but at the time when he wrote, the Book of Genesis had been accessible to educated persons in what was then the chief literary language of the Romans. There is

not, then, the smallest ground for treating the Mosaic cosmogony, whether in the way of original or copy, as the offspring of scientific inquiry.

To speak of it as guesswork would be irrational. There were no materials for guessing. There was no purpose to be served by guessing. For a record of the formation of the world we find no purpose in connection with the ordinary necessities or conveniences of life. Not to mention that down to this day there exists no cosmogony which can be called scientific, though there are theories both ingenious and beautiful, which apparently are coming to be more and more accepted; these, however, being of an origin decidedly late even in the history of modern physics.

But, further, as the Tale of Creation is not poetry nor is it science, so neither, according to its own aspect or profession, is it theory at all. The method here pursued is that of historical recital. The person, who composes or transmits it, seems to believe, and to intend others to believe, that he is dealing with matters of fact. But these matters of fact were, from the nature of the case, altogether inaccessible to inquiry, and impossible to attain by our ordinary mental faculties of perception or reflection, inasmuch as they date before the creation of our

race. If it is, as it surely professes to be, a serious conveyance of truth, it can only be a communication from the Most High; a communication to man and for the use of man, therefore in a form adapted to his mind and to his use. If, thus considered, it is true, then it carries stamped upon it the proof of a Divine revelation; an assertion which cannot commonly be sustained from the nature of the contents as to this or that minute portion of Scripture at large.

If, when thus considered, it proves not to be true, we then have to consider what account of it we are in a condition to give. I cannot say that to me this appears an easy undertaking. "If," says Professor Dana with much reason, "it be true that the narration in Genesis has no support in natural science, it would have been better for its religious character that all the verses between the first and those on the creation of man had been omitted." *

But the truth, or trueness, of which I speak, is truth or trueness as conveyed to and comprehended by the mind of man; and, further, by the mind of man in a comparatively untrained and infant state. I cannot, indeed, wholly shut out from view the possibility that casual imperfections may

* "Creation." By Professor Dana. Oberlin, O., 1885; p. 202.

have crept into the record. Setting aside, however, that possibility, let us consider the conditions of the case as they are exhibited to us by reasonable likelihood; for, if the communication were divine, we may be certain that it would on that account be all the more strictly governed by the laws of the reasonable.

In an address* of singular ability on "The Discord and Harmony between Science and the Bible," Dr. Smith, of the University of Virginia, has drawn some very important distinctions. In the department of natural science, and in the department of Scriptural record, the question lies "between the present interpretation of certain parts of the Hebrew Scriptures, and the present interpretation of certain parts of nature."† "We must not too hastily assume that either of these interpretations is absolute and final." "The science of one epoch is to a large extent a help, which the science of the next uses and abandons." Dr. Smith points out as an example that, down to the early part of the present century, Newton's projectile theory of light seemed to be firmly established, but that it has given place to the theory of undulation, "which has now for fifty years reigned in its

* New York : Hatcham. The Address is dated July 27, 1882.

† *Ibid.* p. 3.

stead." Hence, he observes, we should not be too much elated by the discovery of harmonies, nor should we receive with impatience the assertion of contradictions. Throughout, it is probable, and not demonstrative, evidence with which we are dealing. There should always be a certain element of reserve in our judgments on particulars; yet probable evidence may come indefinitely near to 'demonstration'; and, even as, while falling greatly short of it, it may morally bind us to action, so may it, on precisely the same principles, bind us to belief. What we have to do is, to deal with the evidence before us according to a rational appreciation of its force. It may show on this or that particular question the concord, or it may show the discord, between alleged facts of nature and alleged interpretations of Scripture; or it may leave the question open, for want of sufficient evidence, either way, on which to ground a conclusion.

It is by these principles, and under these limitations, that I desire to see the question tried in the terms in which I think it ought to be stated; namely, not whether the recitals in Genesis at each and every point have an accurately scientific form, but, Whether the statements of the Creation Story, as a whole, appear to stand in such a relation to

the facts of natural science, so far as they have been ascertained, as to warrant or require our concluding that the statements have proceeded, in a manner above the ordinary manner, from the Author of the creation itself.*

Those, who maintain the affirmative of this proposition, have by opponents been termed Reconcilers; and it is convenient, in a controverted matter, to have the power of reference by a single word to the proposers of any given opinion. The same rule of convenience may perhaps justify me in designating those who would assert the negative by the name of Contradictionists. The recorder of the Creation Story in Genesis I may designate by the name of Moses himself, or the Mosaist, or the Mosaic writer. This would not be reasonable, if there were anything extravagant in the supposition that there is a groundwork of fact for the tradition which treats Moses as the author of the Pentateuch. But such a supposition, in whole or in part, is sustained by

* See the attractive paper of Professor Pritchard, in his "Occasional Thoughts," Murray, 1889. He says on p. 261, "I cannot accept the Proem as being, or even as intended to be, an exact and scientific account of Creation," but adds that it "contains within it elements of that same sort of *superhuman aid or superintendence, which is generally understood by the undefined term of inspiration.*"

many and strong presumptions, and I bear in mind that Wellhausen, in giving Bleek's "Introduction" to the world, stated it as his opinion that there is a strong Mosaic element in the Pentateuch.

It does not seem too much to say, that the conveyance of scientific instruction as such would not, under the circumstances of the case, be a reasonable object for the Mosaic writer to pursue; for the condition of primitive man, as it is portrayed in the Book of Genesis, did not require, perhaps did not admit of, scientific instruction. On the other hand, it could not but be a reasonable object then to convey to the mind of man, such as he actually was, a moral lesson drawn from and founded on that picture, that assemblage of created objects, which was before his eyes, and with which he lived in perpetual contact. We have, indeed, to consider both what lesson it would be most rational to convey, and by what method it would be most rational to stamp it, as a living lesson, on the mind by which it was to be received. And the question finally to be decided is not, whether according to the present state of knowledge the recital in the Book of Genesis is at each several point either precise or complete. It may here be general, there particular; it may here describe a continuous process, and it may there

make large omissions, if the things omitted were either absolutely or comparatively immaterial to its purpose ; it may be careful of the actual succession in time, or may deviate from it, according as the one or the other best subserved the general and principal aim ; so that the true question, I must repeat, is no more than this : Do the propositions of the Creation Story in Genesis appear to stand in such a relation to the facts of natural science, so far as they are ascertained, as to warrant or require our concluding that these propositions proceeded, in a manner above the ordinary manner, from the Author of the visible creation ?

What, then, may we conceive to have been the moral and spiritual lessons which the Mosaicist had to communicate, and not only to communicate but to infuse or to impress ? I do not presume to attempt an exhaustive enumeration. But it is not difficult to specify a variety of purposes which the narrative was calculated to promote, and which were of great and obvious value for the education of mankind.

First, it was fitted to teach man his proper place in creation in relation to its several orders, and thereby to prepare at least for the formation of the idea of relative duty, as between man and other created beings.

Secondly, it presented to his mind, and by means of detail made him know and feel what was the beautiful and noble home that he inhabited, and with what a fatherly and tender care Providence had prepared it for him to dwell in. There was a picture before his eyes. That picture was filled with objects of nature, animate and inanimate. I say, one of its great aims may have been to make him know and feel by means of detail; for wholesale teaching, teaching in the lump, or abstract teaching, mostly ineffective even now, would have been wholly futile then. It was needful to use the simplest phrases, that the primitive man might receive a conception, thoroughly faithful in broad outline, of what his Maker had been about on his behalf. So the Maker condescends to partition and set out His work, in making it a picture.

But He proceeds further (and this is the climax) to represent Him self as resting after it. This declaration is in no conflict with any scientific record. It, however, implies a license in the use of language, which for its boldness was never exceeded in any interpretation, reconciling or other, which has been applied to any part of the text of Genesis. But it draws its ample warrant from the strong educative lesson that is to be learned from it; for it invests

both with majesty and authority the doctrine of a day of rest, which was of the highest importance to the higher and inner life of man, and which the daily cares of his existence were but too likely, as experience proved, to efface from his recollection.

I contend then, thirdly, that the Creation Story was intended to have a special bearing on the great institution of the day of rest, or Sabbath, by exhibiting it in the manner of an object lesson. Paley, indeed, has said that God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it (Gen. ii. 3), not at that time but for that reason. He is a writer much to be respected, for many reasons; but, in dealing with Holy Scripture, he was somewhat apt to rest upon the surface. And now we have learned from Assyrian researches how many and how sharply traced are the vestiges, long anterior to the delivery of the law, of some early institution or command, which in that region evidently had given a special sanctity to the number seven, and, in particular, to the seventh day.

Man then, childlike and sinless, had to receive a lesson which was capable of gradual development, and which spoke to something like the following effect. It has not been by a slight or single effort that the nature, in which you are moulded, has

been lifted to its present level ; you have reached it by steps and degrees, and by a plan which, stated in rough outline, may stir your faculties, and help them onwards to the truth through the genial action of wonder, delight, and gratitude. This was a lesson, as it seems to me, perhaps quite large enough for the primitive man on the facts of creation, and one which, when he had heard and had begun to digest it, might well be followed by a rest for generations.

And it further seems to have been vital to the efficiency of this lesson, from such a point of view, that it should have been sharply broken up into parts, although there might be in nature nothing, at any precise points of breakage or transition, to correspond physically with those divisions. They would become intelligible, significant, and useful on a comparison of the several processes in their developed state, and of the vast and measureless differences, which in that state they severally present to contemplation. As, when a series of scenes are now made to move along before the eye of a spectator, his attention is not fixed upon the joints which divide them, but on the scenes themselves, yet the joints constitute a framework as it were for each, and the idea of each is made more distinct and lively than it would have been if, without

any note of division, they had run into one another.

There is, however, another purpose, not yet named, and more remote yet perhaps even more vital, which appears to be powerfully served by the Creation Story of the Bible. In the prehistoric time, polytheism was very largely engendered by national distinctions, rivalries, and amalgamations. By a ready and ingenious compromise each people became habituated to recognize a deity all-sufficient for its own wants, but unconcerned with those of others. In the course of time and of successive change, many of these deities might find themselves inducted into one and the same thearchy, or mythological system, such as that of Assyria or of Olympus, and sitting there side by side. When this happened, the polytheistic idea had reached its full development. But the road to it lay principally through the erection of separate thrones each for its particular national organization, and through the limits thus imposed upon the earlier and more proper conception of a Divine Governor. But where the Creation Story of Genesis was received, the door was effectually closed for all thinking men against these coequal and purely national gods. And how? Because the God of Israel was the Maker of the world, and of all the

nations in it. It was His creation ; and its inhabitants, whether terrestrial or celestial, were His creatures. Thus the narrative in this great chapter was nothing less than a charter of monotheism ; and though, in Israelitish practice, Baal and Ashtoreth might find their way into popular worship, and spread around them an infinity of corruption, the lines of the dogma never were obscured, and the standard of authoritative reform still lifted up its head to heaven from the first day of idolatry to the last, when, in the Exile, it was finally submerged.*

How effectually and vividly this great idea of creation, lost or dilapidated elsewhere, was impressed upon the Hebrew mind we may perceive from an usage in the Psalms, to which I do not remember a parallel in the classical literature. The lower orders of animated creatures are themselves placed in a living relation to the Almighty. "The lions roaring after their prey, do seek their meat from God. . . . These all wait upon thee ; that thou mayest give them meat in due season."† Nor is the boldness of Hebrew devotion arrested at this point. It extends to the inanimate

* For the further elucidation of the subject of this paragraph see the Postscript to "The Creation Story."

† Ps. civ. 21, 27.

world. "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. . . . Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words into the ends of the world. . . . The sun cometh forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a giant to run his course." * This is without doubt noble poetry, but it is also nobler than any poetry. Mute Nature is instinct and vocal with worship, and Creation in its humblest orders, giving a lesson to its loftiest, ministers to the glory of the Most High.

In order, then, to approach any attempt at comparison between the record of Scripture and the record of Natural Science, we must consider first, as far as reasonable presumption carries us, what is the proper object of the scientist, and what was the proper object of Moses, or of the Mosaic writer, in the first chapter of Genesis.

The object of the scientist is simply to state the facts of nature in the cosmogony as and so far as he can find them. The object of the Mosaic writer is broadly distinct; it is, surely, to convey moral and spiritual training. This training was to be conveyed to human beings of childlike temperament and of unimproved understanding. It was his business to use those words which

* Ps. xix. 1-5.

would best convey the lessons he had to teach; which would carry *most truth* into the minds of those he taught. This observation has not the honors of originality. "He emphasized," says Rabbi Grossmann,* in his interesting tract on Maimonides, "as very proper and wise, the Talmudic maxim, that the Torah employs such diction as is likely to be most communicative."

In speaking of the Mosaic writer, I would, without presumption, seek to include any divine impulse which may have prompted him, or may have dictated any communication from God to man, in whatever form it may have been conveyed. With this aim in view, words of figure, though literally untrue, might carry more truth home than words of fact; and words less exact will even now often carry more truth than words superior in exactness. The truth to be conveyed was, indeed, in its basis physical; but it was to serve moral and spiritual ends, and accordingly by these ends the method of its conveyance behaved to be shaped and pictured.

I submit, then, that the days of creation are neither the solar days of twenty-four hours, nor are they the geological periods which the geologist himself is compelled popularly, and in a manner utterly remote

* P. 12. Putnam, New York and London, 1890.

from precision, to describe as millions upon millions of years. To use such language as this is simply to tell us, that we have no means of forming a determinate idea upon the subject of the geologic periods. I set aside both these interpretations, as I do not think the Mosaist intended to convey an idea like the first, which was false, or like the second, which for his auditory would have been barren and unmeaning. Unmeaning, and even confusing in the highest degree; for large statements in figures are well known to be utterly beyond comprehension for man at an early intellectual stage; and I have myself, I think, shown* that, even among the Achaian or Homeric Greeks, the limits of numerical comprehension were extremely narrow, and all large numbers were used, so to speak, at a venture.

It seems to me that the "days" of the Mosaist are more properly to be described as CHAPTERS IN THE HISTORY OF THE CREATION. That is to say, the purpose of the writer, in speaking of the days, was the same as the purpose of the historian is, when he divides his work into chapters. His object is to give clear and sound instruction. So that he can do this, and in

* "Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age," vol. iii., Section on Number.

order that he may do it, the periods of time assigned to each chapter are longer or shorter, according as the one or the other may minister to better comprehension of his subject by his readers. Further, in point of chronology, his chapters often overlap. He finds it needful, always keeping his end in view, to pursue some narrative to its close, and then, stepping backwards, to take up some other series of facts, although their exordium dated at a period of time which he has already traversed. The resources of the literary art, aided for the last four centuries by printing, enable the modern writer to confront more easily these difficulties of arrangement, and so to present the material to his reader's eye, in text or margin, as to place the texture of his chronology in harmony with the texture of the action he has to relate. The Mosaist, in his endeavor to expound the ordinary development of the visible world, had no such resources. His expedient was to lay hold on that which, to the mind of his time, was the best example of complete and orderly division. This was the day; an idea at once simple, definite, and familiar. As one day is divided from another, not by any change visible to the eye at a given moment, yet effectually, by the broad chasm of the intervening night, so were the stages of the

creative work several and distinct, even if, like the lapse of time, they were without breach of continuity. Each had its work, each had the beginning and the completion of that work, even as the day is begun by its morning, and completed and concluded by its evening.

And now to sum up. In order that the narrative might be intelligible, it was useful to subdivide the work. This could most effectively be done by subdividing it into periods of time. And further, it was well to choose that particular circumscription or period of time which is the most definite and best understood. Of all these, the day is clearly the best, as compared with the month or the year—first, because of its small and familiar compass; and, secondly, because of the strong and marked division which separates one day from another.

Hence, we may reasonably argue, it is that not here only, but throughout the Scripture, and even down to the present time in familiar human speech, the day is figuratively used to describe periods of time, perfectly undefined as such, but defined, for practical purposes, by the lives or events to which reference is made. And if it be said there was a danger of its being misunderstood in this particular case, the answer is that such danger of misapprehension at-

taches in various degrees to all use of figurative language; but figurative language is still used. And with reason because the mischiefs arising from such danger are rare and trivial, in comparison with the force and clearness which it lends to truth on its passage, through a clouded atmosphere of folly, indifference, and prejudice, into the mind of man. In this particular case, the danger and inconvenience are at their minimum, the benefit at its zenith; for no moral mischief ensues because some have supposed the days of the creation to be pure solar days of twenty-four hours, while the benefit has been that the grand conception of orderly development, and ascent from chaos to man, became among the Hebrew people an universal and familiar truth, of which other races appear to have lost sight.

I may now part from the important and long-vexed discussion on the Mosiac days. But I shall further examine the general question, what is the true method, what the reasonable spirit, of interpretation to be applied to the words of the Creation Story? I will state frankly my opinion that, in this important matter, too much has sometimes been conceded in modern days to the Scientist and to the Hebraist, just as in former days too much was allowed to the unproved assumptions of the Theologian. Now it is

evident that the proper ground of the Scientist and of the Hebraist respectively is unassailable, as against those who are neither Scientists nor Hebraists. On the meaning of the words used in the Creation Story I, as an *ignoramus*, have only to accept the statements of Hebrew scholars, with gratitude for the aid received; and in like manner those of men skilled in natural science on the nature and succession of the orders of being, and the transitions from one to the other. Not that their statements are inerrable; but they constitute the best working material in our possession. Still they are the statements of men whose title to speak with authority is confined to their special province; and if we allow them without protest to go beyond it, and still to claim that authority when they are what is called at school "out of bounds," we are much to blame, and may suffer for our carelessness.

I will now endeavor to illustrate and apply what has been said. The Hebraist says, I will conduct you safely (as far as the case allows) to the meaning of the Hebrew words. And the Scientist makes the same promise in regard to the facts of the created orders, so far as they are exhibited by geological investigations into the crust of the earth. At first sight it

may seem as if these two authoritative witnesses must cover the whole ground, each setting out from his own point of departure, the two then meeting in the midst, and leaving no unoccupied space between them. But my contention is that there is a ground which neither of them is entitled to occupy in his character as a specialist, and on which he has no warrant for entering, except in so far as he is a just observer and reasoner in a much wider field. And what is the residuary subject-matter still to be disposed of? Not the meaning of the Hebrew words. The Hebraist has already given us their true equivalents in English. We now learn, for example, that the "whales" of Gen. i. 21 are not whales at all, but that they are aquatic monsters* or great creatures; while we learn from the biologist that the whale is a late mammal. So geology has acquainted us what are the relative dates of the water and of the land populations, and has supplied much information as to reptiles, birds,

* R. V., the great sea-monsters. "It seems, on the whole, most probable, that the creatures here said to have been created were serpents, crocodiles, and other huge saurians, though possibly any large monsters of sea or river may be included" (Bp. Browne *in loc.*, "Speaker's Commentary"). Possibly a word meaning, whether wholly or *inter alia*, crocodiles would convey a pretty clear idea to the mind of the Hebrews, after their sojourn in Egypt.

and beasts. But there remains a great uncovered ground, and a great unsolved question. It is this. Given the facts as the geologist is led to state them, given the Hebrew tongue as the instrument through which the relator has to work, what are the terms, and what is the order and adjustment of terms, through which he can convey most of truth and force, with least of incumbrance and of impediment, to the mind of man, in the condition in which he had to deal with it? Let me be permitted to say that the only specialism, which can be of the smallest value here, is that of the close observer of human nature; of the student of human action, and of the methods which Divine Providence employs in the conduct of its dealings with men. Certainly I can lay no claim to be heard here more than any other person. Yet will I say, that any man whose labor and duty for several scores of years has included as their central point the study of the means of making himself intelligible to the mass of men, is *pro tanto* perhaps in a better position to judge what would be the forms and methods of speech proper for the Mosaic writer to adopt, than the most perfect Hebraist as such, or the most consummate votary of natural sciences as such.

I will now endeavor to try some portions of the case which turn upon verbal difficulty. At the outset of the narrative the relator says, that "the earth was without form and void" (Gen. i. 2) and that "the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Nay, how is this, says the Hebraist? The Hebrew word for earth means earth, and the word used for water never means anything except water. But according to the beautiful theory, which has during the last half-century won so largely the adhesion of the scientific world, and which seems to be mainly called the nebular theory, at the commencement of the process which Genesis describes, and in its early stages, there was no earth, and there were no waters. Is the relator here really at fault? It seems to me that it might be quite as easy to cavil at the phrase nebular theory, though it be one in use among scientific men, as it is to find fault with these words of Genesis. For nothing can be more different than a *nebula* or cloud from a vast expanse of incandescent gaseous matter. In truth, we seem to have for our point of departure a time when all the elements and all the forces of the visible universe were in chaotic mixture, whereas there could hardly be any sort of *nebula* until they had begun to be disengaged from one another. How

then are we to judge of the use of the word "earth" by the Mosaic writer? Is it not thus? He is dealing with an Adam, or with a primitive race of men, who have the earth under their eyes. He wants to give them an idea of its coming into existence. And he says what we may fairly paraphrase in this way: that which has now become earth, and was then becoming earth, the solid well-defined form you see, was as yet without form and void; epithets which I am told might be improved upon, but this is a matter by the way.

So again with respect to water. The men for whom the relator wrote knew, perhaps, of no fluid except water, at any rate of none vast and practically measureless in volume. What was the idea he had to convey? It was not the special and distinctive character of the liquid called water; it was the broad separation between solid as such, familiar, firm, immovable under his feet, and fluid as such, movable and fluctuating at large in space. No doubt the idea conveyed by the word waters is an imperfect idea, although waters are still waters at times when they may be holding vast quantities of solid in solution. But it was an idea easy, clear, and familiar up to the point of expressing forcibly the contrast between the ancient state of things,

with its weltering waste, and the recent and defined conditions of the habitable earth. Could we ask of the relator more than that he should employ, among the words at his disposal, that which would come nearest to conveying a true idea? And had he any word so good as water for his purpose, though it was but an approximation to the actual fact? Dr. Driver describes the scene as that of a "surging chaos." An admirable phrase, I make no doubt, for our modern and cultivated minds; but a phrase which, in my judgment, would have left the pupils of the Mosaic writer exactly in the condition out of which it was his purpose to bring them; namely, a state of utter ignorance and total darkness, with possibly a little ruffle of bewilderment to boot. Another description claiming high authority is, an "uncompounded, homogeneous, gaseous condition" of matter; to which the same observation will apply. Even now, it is only by rude and bald approximations that the practised intellects of our scientists can bring home to us a conception of the actual process by which *chaos* passed into *kosmos*, or, in other words, confusion became order, medley became sequence, seeming anarchy became majestic law, and horror softened into beauty. Before censuring the Mosaist, who had to deal with

grown children, let the adverse critic try his hand upon some little child. I believe he will find that the method and language of this relator are not only good, but superlatively good, for the aim he had in view, if once for all we get rid of standards of interpretation other than the genuine and just one, which tests the means employed by their relation to the end contemplated and sought.

I now approach a larger head of objection, which is usually handled by the Contradictionists in a tone of confidence rising into the pæan of triumph. But let me, before presuming to touch on objections to particulars of the Creation Story, guard myself against being supposed to put forward any portion of what follows as unconditional assertion, or final comment on the text. The general situation is this. Objectors do not hesitate to declare dogmatically that the Great Chapter is in contradiction with the laws and facts of nature, and that attempts to reconcile them are futile and irrational. It is thus sought to close the question. My aim is to show that the question is not closed, and that the condemnation pronounced upon the Mosaiist is premature. For this purpose I offer conjecturally, and in absolute submission to all that biology and geology, or other



forms of science, have established, replies which are strictly provisional; but replies which I consider that the Contradictionist ought, together with other and weightier replies, to confute, or legitimately to consider, before he can be warranted in asserting the contradiction. But I proceed.

How hopeless, is the cry, to reconcile Genesis with fact, when, as a fact, the sun is the source of light, and yet in Genesis, light is the work of the first day, and vegetation of the third, while sun, moon, and stars appear only on the fourth! Nay, worse still. Whereas the morning and the evening depend wholly on the rotation of the earth upon its own axis as it travels round the sun, the Mosaist is so ignorant that he gives us not days only, but the mornings and the evenings of days before the sun is created. And so his narration explodes, not by blows aimed at it from without, but by its own internal self-contradictions. It is hissed, like a blundering witness, out of court. Not that this is the opinion of astronomers in general. Mr. Lockyer,* for example, cites with apparent approval a passage from his very distinguished predecessor in the science, Halley, who says that the diffused lucid medium he had found disposed of the diffi-

* *Nineteenth Century*, Nov. 1889, p. 788.

culty which some have moved against the description Moses gives of the Creation, alleging that light could not be created without the sun.

The first triad of days, says Professor Dana,* sets forth the events connected with the inorganic history of the earth. The second triad, from the fourth day to the sixth, is occupied with the events of the organic history, from the creation of the first animal to man. He finds in the general structure of the narrative a considerable degree of elaboration, an arrangement full of art. The passage from ver. 14 to ver. 19 is, in one sense, a qualification of the order he thinks to have been laid down, inasmuch as the heavenly bodies belong to the inorganic division of the history. From another point of view, however, this arrangement contributes in a marked manner to the symmetry of the narrative. The first triad of days begins with the first and gradual detachment of light from the "surging chaos"; the second, at the stage in which light has reached its final distribution. The central mass had now assumed with a certain amount of regularity (for according to heliologists the process does not even yet appear to be absolutely completed) its spherical and luminous figure, after shedding off

* Dana's "Creation," p. 207.

from itself the minor masses, each to find for itself its own orbit of rotation. Or, if we are to assume that the photosphere or vapor-envelope of the earth itself had obstructed the vision of the sun, we have, further, to assume* that this obstacle had now disappeared, and the visibility of the sun was established. So that light, or the light-power, while diffused, ushers in the first division of the mighty process; the same light-power, concentrated by the operation of the rotatory principle, and for practical purposes become such as we now know it, is placed at the head of the second division, the division that deals with organic life.

It is remarkable, that the subject of light is the only one which is dealt with in two separate sections of the narrative. The gradual severance, or disengagement, of the earth from its present vesture, the atmosphere, and of the solid land from the ocean, are continuously handled in verses 6-10. Each of the processes is summed up into its grand result, as if it had been a violent, convulsive, instantaneous act. The avoidance of all attempt to explain the process seems to me only a proof of the wisdom which guided the formation of the tale. To the primitive man it would have become a

* Guyot, "Creation," ch. xi. p. 92.

barren puzzle; the wood must have been lost in the trees. As it now stands, mental confusion is avoided, and definite ideas are conveyed.

There seems, however, to be a special reason for the introduction of the heavenly bodies at this particular place. It was evidently needful at some place or other to give a specific account of the day, or compartment of time, which is employed to mark the severance of the different stages of creation from each other. At what point of the narrative could this account be most properly and most accurately introduced? In order to answer this question, let us consider the situation rather more at large.

The supposition is, that we set out with a seething mass that contains all the elements which are to become the solids and liquids, the moist and dry, the heat and the non-heat or cold, the light and the non-light or darkness, that so largely determine the external conditions of our present existence. By degrees, as, according to the rarity or density of parts, the centripetal or the centrifugal force prevails, the huge bulk of the sun consolidates itself in the centre, and aggregations of matter (rings, according to Guyot,* which afterwards become, or may become, spheres), are detached from it to

* "Creation," pp. 67, 73.

form the planets, under the agency of the same mechanical forces; all or some of them, in their turn, dismissing from their as yet ill-compacted surfaces other subaltern masses to revolve around them as satellites, or otherwise, according to the balance of forces, to take their course in space. Meantime, the great cooling process, which is still in progress at this day, has begun. It proceeds at a rate determined for it by its particular conditions, among which mass and motion are of essential consequence; for, other things being equal, a small body will cool faster and a large body will cool slower; and a body moving more rapidly through space of a lower temperature than its own will cool more rapidly; while one which is stationary, or more nearly stationary, or which diffuses heat less rapidly from its surface into the colder space, will retain a high temperature longer. Owing to these perhaps with other causes, the temperature of the earth-surface has been adapted to the conditions of human life, and of the more recent animal life, for a very long time; to those of the earlier animals, and of vegetation in its different orders, for we know not how much longer; while the sun, though gradually losing some part of his stock of caloric, still remains at a temperature inordi-

nately high, and with a formation comparatively incomplete.

Considering, then, what are the relations between the conditions of heat and those of moisture, and how the coatings of vapor, "the swaddling-band of cloud,"* might affect the visibility of bodies, may it not be rash to affirm that the sun is, as a definite and compact body, older than the earth? or that it is so old? or that the Mosaist might not properly treat the visibility of the sun, in its present form, as best marking for man the practical inception of his existence? or that, with heat, light, soil, and moisture ready to its service, primordial vegetation might not exist on the surface of a planet like the earth, before the sun had fully reached his matured condition of sufficiently compact, material, and well-defined figure, and of visibility to the eye? May not, once for all, the establishment of the relation of visibility between earth and sun be the most suitable point for the relator in Genesis to bring the two into connection? And here again I would remind the reader that the Mosaic days may be chapters in a history; and that, not in despite of the law of series, but with a view to its best practicable application, the chapters of a history may overlap.

The priority of Earth to Sun, as given in

* Dana, p. 210.

the narrative, carries us so far as this, that vegetative work (of what kind I shall presently inquire) is stated to be proceeding on the surface of the earth before any relation of earth with sun is declared. It is then declared in the terms, "and God *made* two great lights" (ver. 16). Now the *making* of earth is nowhere declared, but only implied. And who shall say that there is some one exact point of time in the continuous process which (according to the nebular theory) reaches from the first beginning of rotation down to the present condition of the solar system, to which point, and to which alone, the term making must belong? But, unless there be such a point, it seems very difficult to convict the Mosaic writer of error in the choice he has made of an opportunity for introducing the heavenly bodies into his narrative.

I suppose that no apology is needed for his mentioning the moon and the stars as accessories in the train of the sun, and combining them all without note of time, although their several "makings" may have proceeded at different speeds. But here again we find exhibited that principle of relativity to man and his uses, by which the writer in Genesis appears so wisely to steer his course throughout. We are told of "two great lights" (ver. 16); and one of

them is the moon. The formation of the stars is interjected soon after, as if comparatively insignificant. But the planet-stars individually are in themselves far greater and more significant than the moon, which is denominated a great light. In what sense is the moon a great light? Only in virtue of its relation to us. For its magnitude, as it is represented on the human retina, is far larger than that of the stars, approaching that of the sun; and its office also makes it the queen of the nocturnal heaven. So, then, the general upshot is, that the mention of the sun is introduced at that point in the cosmogonic process when, from the condition of our form and atmosphere, or of his, or of both, he had become so definite and visible as to be finally efficient for his office of dividing day from day, and year from year; that the planets, being of an altogether secondary importance to us, simply appear as his attendant company; and that to the moon, a body in itself comparatively insignificant, is awarded a rather conspicuous place, which, if objectively considered, is out of proportion, but which at once falls into line when we acknowledge relativity as the basis of the narrative, by reason of the great importance of the functions, which this satellite discharges on behalf of the inhabitants of the earth.

Next, it is alleged that we have days with an evening and a morning before we have a sun to supply a measure of time for them. Doubtless there could be no approach to anything like an evening and a morning, so long as light was uniformly diffused. But under the nebular theory, the work of the first day implies an initial concentration of light; and, from the time when light began to be thus powerfully concentrated, would there not be an evening and a morning, though imperfect, for any revolving solid of the system, according as it might be turned towards, or from, the centre of the highest luminosity?

But we have not yet emerged from the net of the Contradictionist, who lays hold on the vegetation verses (11, 12) to impeach the credit of the Creation Story. The objection here becomes twofold. First, we have vegetation anterior to the sun; and secondly, this is not merely an aquatic vegetation for the support of aquatic life, nor merely a rude and primordial vegetation, such as that of and before the coal-measures, but a vegetation complete and absolute, including fern-grass, then the herb yielding seed, and lastly the fruit-tree, yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself. Here is the food of mammals and even of man provided, when neither of them

was created, or was even about to exist until after many a long antecedent stage of lower life had found its way into creation and undertaken its office there.

First, as regards vegetation before the sun's performance of his present function in the heavens is announced. There were light and heat, atmosphere with its conditions of moist and dry, soil prepared to do its work in nutrition. Can there be ground for saying that, with such provision made, vegetation could not, would not, take place? Let us, for argument's sake, suppose that the sun could now recede into an earlier condition, could go back by some few stages of that process through which he became our sun; his material less compact, his form less defined, his rays more intercepted by the "swaddling-band" of cloud and vapor. Vegetation might be modified in character, but must it therefore cease? May we not say that a far more violent paradox would have been hazarded, and a sounder objection would have lain, had the Mosaic writer failed to present to us at least an initial vegetation before the era at which the sun had obtained his present degree of definiteness in spherical form, and the conditions for the transmission of his rays to us had reached substantially their present state?

But, then, it is fairly observed that the

vegetation as described is not preparatory and initial, but full-formed; also, that any tracing of vegetation anterior to animal life in the strata is ambiguous and obscure. In the age of Protozoa, the earliest living creatures, the indications of plants are not determinable, according to the high authority of Sir J. W. Dawson. It is observed by Canon Driver "that the proof from science of the existence of plants before animals is inferential and *à priori*." * Guyot, however, holds a directly contrary opinion, and says the present remains indicate a large presence of infusorial protophytes in the early seas.† But suppose the point to be conceded. Undoubtedly, all *à priori* assumptions ought in inquiries of this kind to be watched with the utmost vigilance and jealousy. Still there are limits, beyond which vigilance and jealousy cannot push their claims. Is there anything strange in the supposition that the comparatively delicate composition of the first vegetable structures should have given way, and become indiscernible to us, amidst the shock and pressure of firmer and more durable material? The flesh of the mammoth has, indeed, been preserved to us, and eaten by dogs

* "The Cosmogony of Genesis," in *The Expositor*, January 1886, p. 29.

† "Creation," x. p. 90.

in our own time, though coming down from ages which we have no means of measuring; but then it was not exposed to the same pressure, and it subsisted under conditions of temperature which were adequately antiseptic. But has all palæozoic life been ascertained by its flesh, or do we not owe our knowledge of many among the earlier forms of animated life altogether to their osseous structures? And, in cases where only bone remains, is it an extravagant use of argument *à priori* to hold that there must have been flesh also? And, if flesh, why should not vegetable matter have subsisted, and have disappeared? Canon Driver, indeed, observes* that from a very early date animals preyed upon animals. Still the first animal could not prey upon himself; there must have been vegetable *pabulum*, out of which an animal body was first developed. "Before the beasts," says Sir George Stokes, "came the plants, plants which are necessary for their sustenance."†

Next, with respect to the objection that the vegetation of the eleventh and twelfth verses is a perfected vegetation, and that there existed no such vegetation before animal life began. But why are we to sup-

* *The Expositor*, January, 1886, p. 29.

† Letter to Mr. Elfein, Aug. 14, 1883.

pose that the Mosaic writer intended to say that such a vegetation did exist before animal life began? For no other reason than this: having mentioned the first introduction of vegetable life, he carries it on, without breaking his narrative, to its completion. In so proceeding, he does exactly what the historian does when, for the sake of clearer comprehension, he brings one series of events from its inception to its close, although in order of time the beginning only, and not the completion, belongs to the epoch at which he introduces it. What I have called the rule of relativity, the intention, namely, to be intelligible to man, seems to show the reason of his arrangement. If his meaning was, "The beautiful order of trees, plants, and grasses which you see around you had its first beginnings in the era when living creatures were about to commence their movements in the waters and on the earth, and all this was part of the fatherly work of God on your behalf"—such meaning was surely well expressed, expressed after a sound and workmanlike fashion, in the text of the Creation Story as it stands.

I will next notice the objection that the Mosaic writer takes (according to the received version) no notice of the great age of reptiles, but proceeds at once from the

creation of marine animals (ver. 20) to the fowl that may "fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." He thus passes over without notice the amphibians, the reptiles proper, the insects, and the marsupial or early mammals, on his way to the birds. It is added that he brackets the birds with the fishes, and thus makes them of the same date.

It is requisite here to observe, with respect to birds, that Professor Dana * writes of the narrative in Genesis as follows: speaking of the relation between the Mosaic narrative and the ascertained facts of science, he uses these words: "The accordance is exact with the succession made out for the earliest species of these grand divisions, if we except the division of birds, about which there is doubt."

Owen, however, in his "Palæontology," † places animal life in six classes, according to the following order, namely—

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. Invertebrates. | 4. Birds. |
| 2. Fishes. | 5. Mammals. |
| 3. Reptiles. | 6. Man. |

In the more recent "Manual" of Profes-

* "Creation," as before, p. 215.

† Second edition, 1861, p. 5.

Dr Prestwich (1886) the order of seniority stands as follows:—

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Cryptogamous Plants. | 4. Mammals. |
| 2. Fishes. | 5. Man. |
| 3. Birds. | |

In the "Manual"* of Etheridge we are supplied with the following series, after fishes: 1. Fossil reptiles. 2. Ornithosauria; "*flying animals, which combined the character of reptiles with those of birds.*" 3. The first birds of the secondary rocks, with "feathers in all respects similar to those of existing birds." 4. Mammals.

It thus appears that much turns on the definition of a bird, and that, in this point as in others, it is hard, on the evidence thus presented, seriously to impeach the character of the Creation Story. Largely viewed, the place of birds, as an order in creation, is given us by our scientific teachers, or, as I have shown, by many and recognized authorities among them, between fishes and the class of mammals. It is a gratuitous assumption that the Mosaist intends to assign to them the same date as fishes; he places them in the same day, but then we have to bear in mind that he more than once gives several actions to the same

* Phillips's "Manual of Geology," part ii., by R. Etheridge, F. R. S., chap. xxv. pp. 511-520.

day. He sets them after the fishes; and the fairer construction surely is, not that they were contemporaneous, but that they were subsequent. He forbears, it is true, to notice amphibious reptiles, insects, and marsupials. And why? All these, variously important in themselves, fill no large place, some of them no place at all, in the view and in the concerns of primitive man; and, having man for his object, he forbears, on his guiding principle of relativity, to incumber his narrative with them.

If it be true that the demarcation of the order of birds in creation is less sharply drawn than that (for example) of fishes and of mammals, may we not be permitted to trace a singular propriety in the diminution, so to speak, of emphasis with which the Mosaist gives to their introduction a more qualified distinctness of outline, by simply subjoining them (ver. 20) to the aquatic creation.

I have now made bold to touch on the principal objections popularly known. They run into details which it has not been possible fully to notice, but which seem to be without force, except such as they derive from the illegitimate process of holding down the Mosaic writer in his narration, so short, so simple, so sublime, by restraints which the ordinary historian,

though he has plenty of auxiliary expedients, and is under no restraint of space, finds himself obliged to shake off if he wishes to be understood. On the introduction of the great or recent mammals, and of man, as the objector is silent, I remain silent also.

It would be uncandid, however, not to notice the "creeping thing" of verses 24, 25, and 26. In these verses the "creeping thing" is distinguished from cattle, and undoubtedly appears upon the scene as if it were a formation wholly new. If the Mosaist really intended to convey that this was the first appearance of the creeping thing in creation, there is I suppose no doubt that he is at war with the firmly established witness of natural science. Guyot, indeed, says* that these creeping things are not reptiles, but are the smaller mammals, rats, mice, and the like. If, however, the common rendering be maintained, it may be just worth while to suggest a possible explanation. It is as follows. These creeping things were a very minor fact in the scheme of creation; so that the purpose of the relator, and the comparative importance of the facts may here, as elsewhere, govern his mode of handling them. It is fit to be observed that he never men-

* "Creation," p. 120.

tions insects at all, as if they were too insignificant to find a place among the larger items of his account; as if he advisedly selected his materials, and sifted off the less important among them. And there does seem to be some license or looseness in his method of treating these creeping things; for while he severs them from fish, fowl, and beast, in the verses I have named, and again in verse 30 from fowl and from beast, yet in verse 28, when the great charter of dominion is granted to man, he sums up in three divisions only, and makes man the lord "over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Reptiles appear to have passed out of his view, either wholly, or so far as not to deserve separate mention, and it may seem likely that he did not think their importance such as to call for a particular and defined place, and, while according to them incidental mention, did not mean to give them such a place, in the chronological order of creation. Let the Contradictionist make the most he can out of this secondary matter: it will not greatly avail.

If, on the whole, such be a fair statement of arguments and results, we may justly render our thanks to Dana, Guyot,* Daw-

* In the preface to Guyot's "Creation" will be found some account of the recent literature of this subject. I

son, Stokes, and other scientific authorities, who seem to find no cause for supporting the broad theory of contradiction. I am well aware of my inability to add an atom of weight to their judgments. Yet I have ventured to attempt applying to this great case what I hold to be the just laws of a narrative intended to instruct and to persuade, and thus finding a key to the true construction of the Chapter. For myself, I cannot but at present remain before and above all things impressed with the profound and marvellous wisdom, that has guided the human instrument, whether it were pen or tongue, which was first commissioned from on high, to hand onwards for our admiration and instruction this wonderful, this unparalleled relation. If I am a "reconciler," I shall not call myself a mere apologist, for I aim at a positive, not merely a defensive result, and claim that my reader should feel how true it is that in this brief relation he possesses an inestimable treasure. And I submit to those, who may have closely followed my remarks, that my words

must also mention a valuable pamphlet entitled "The Higher Criticism," by Mr. Rust, Rector of Westerfield, Suffolk. It sets forth the scope of the negative criticism at large, and recommends (p. 30) to "have patience for a while, and wait to see the issue." Similar advice has, I understand, been given in the recent Charge of the learned Bishop of Oxford.

were not wholly idle words, when, without presuming to lay down any universal and inflexible proposition, and without questioning any single contention of persons specially qualified, I said that the true question was whether the words of the Mosaic writer, in his opening chapter, taken as a whole, do not stand, according to our present knowledge, in such a relation to the facts of nature as to warrant and require, thus far, the conclusion that the Ordainer of Nature, and the Giver or Guide of the Creation Story, are One and the Same.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE CREATION STORY.

[Mankind have travelled not by one but by several roads into polytheism. It took a thousand years from the institution of the Mosaic legislation to place the chosen people in a state of security from this insidious mischief. But all along a powerful apparatus of means had been at work, which was strengthened from time to time as Divine Providence saw fit. The foundation, however, had been laid in the Creation Story. It was impossible for those who received it either to travel or to glide into polytheism by either of the widest roads then open, the

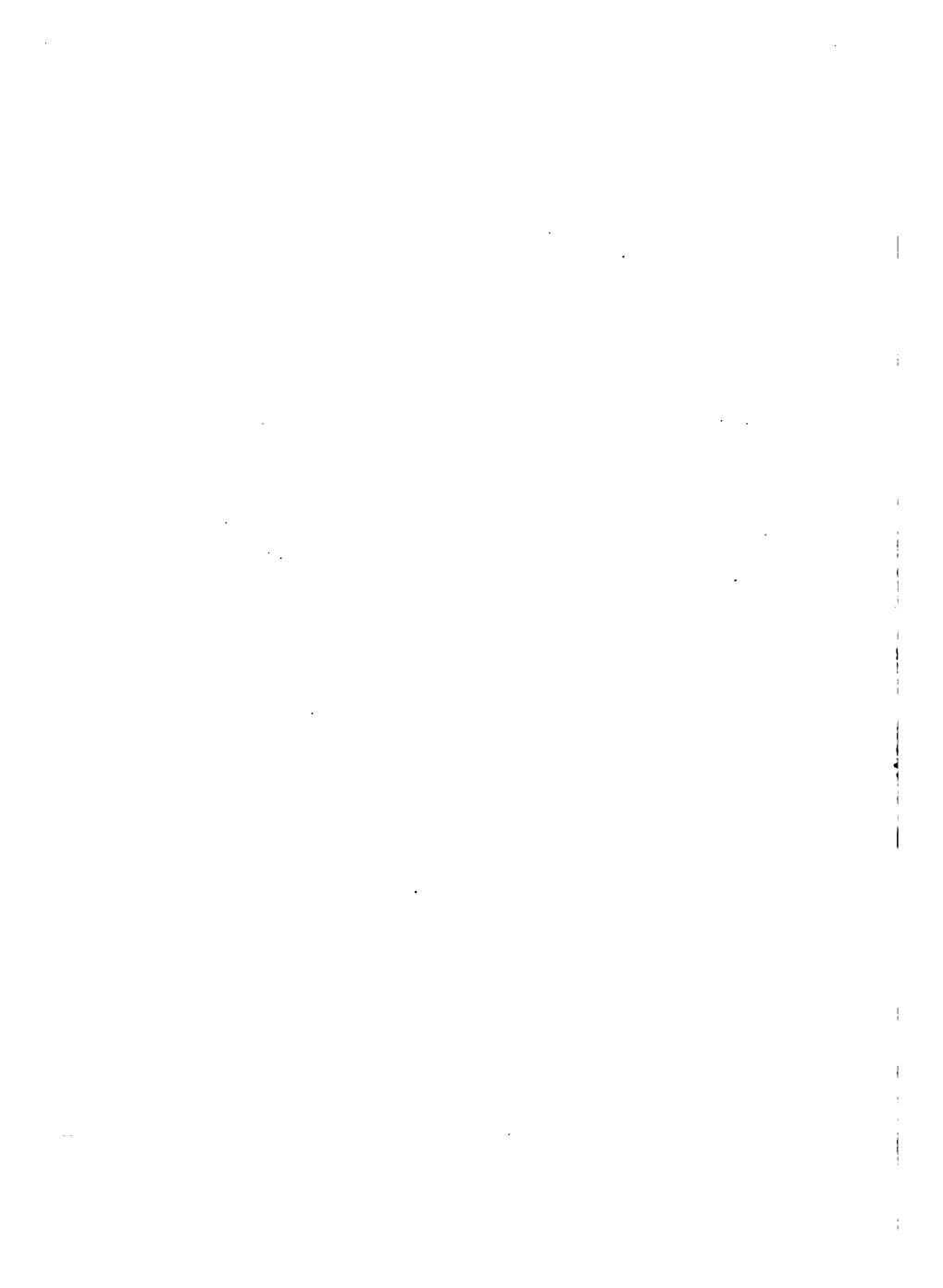
system of Nature-worship, and the deification of heroes. No one could make the Sun his God, who really believed that there was a God who created the Sun. Even more perhaps was it needful that the line should be clearly and sharply drawn between Deity and humanity, and that a barrier not capable of being surmounted should exclude kings and heroes from deification. In the Homeric or Olympian system, the worship of inanimate nature was studiously shut out; but the beginnings of deification are visible in the case of Heracles,* whose very self (*avρός*) sits at the banquets of the Immortals, and of the twin brothers, Castor and Pollux, who live and die on alternate days, and who, when they live, receive honors like the gods. In the height of their civilization the Romans set up their living Emperors as divinities. But neither they nor the Greeks believed in the creation of man by the Almighty. The old cosmogonies of the heathen placed matter and other impersonal entities in a position of priority to their gods, who merely take their turn to come upon the scene. Only (I believe) in the Hebrew story is the Deity anterior, without which condition He cannot be supreme.

Besides being anterior, He is separate.

* Od. xi. 302-5.

Did we find in the pages of the Old Testament a story of deification, we should at once know it to be spurious, because in contradiction, alike as to letter and as to spirit, of the entire context.

It is, I hope, not presumptuous to proceed a step further and to say that this broad and effectual severance was necessary not only for the Old dispensation, but for the New: not only for the exclusion of idolatry in all its forms, but for the establishment of the Incarnation. A marriage would be no marriage, unless the individuality of the parties to it were determinate and ineffaceable. The Christian dogma of the two natures in one Person would be in no sense distinctive, if it had been habitual in the preparatory dispensation, as in some of the religions outside it, for man properly so-called to pass into proper deity. Reunion was to be effected between the Almighty and His prime earthly creature by the bridge to be constructed over that flood, the flood of sin, which parted them; and, to sustain that bridge, it was needful that the natures to be brought into union should stand apart like piers perfectly defined, each on its own separate and solid foundation. And the firm foundations of those piers were laid, to endure throughout all time, by the great Creation Story.]



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